



S. Harding del.

E. Harding Jun. Sculp.

M^{RS}. HARLOWE,

*In the Character of Dorothy in the Comedy of
 "The Jealous Husband!"
 "I think I ha' gotten all in apple pie order!"*

Published Nov. 1. 1794 by Tho^s. Arrowsmith, Middle Row Holborn.

HEIGHO FOR A HUSBAND!

A COMEDY.

643. h. 6
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AS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE-ROYAL,

IN THE HAY-MARKET,

ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1794.

By Francis Godolphin Walton.

" — — — — nonumque prematur in annum."

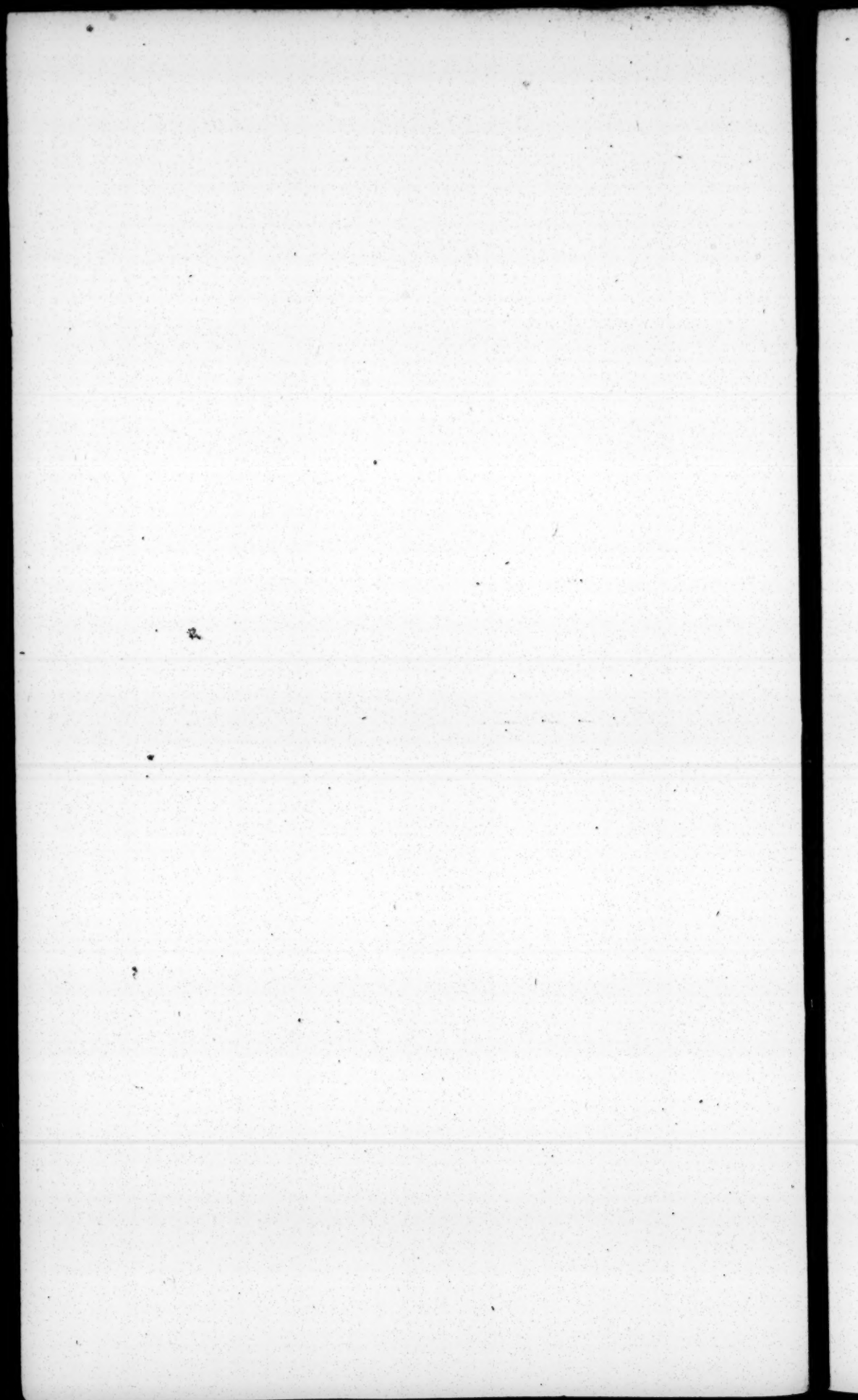
Q. HORATII FLACCI, *Epistola ad PISONES.*

LONDON:

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AND SOLD BY B. CROSBY, STATIONERS COURT; RICHARDSON, ROYAL-EXCHANGE; HAMILTON & CO. BEECH-STREET; ALLEN & WEST, PATER-NOSTER ROW; MESSRS. HOOKHAM & CARPENTER, AND W. MILLER, OLD BOND-STREET; OWEN, PICCADILLY; MARTIN & BAYNE, AND JORDAN, FLEET-STRET.

1794.

[Price ONE SHILLING and SIXPENCE.]



P R E F A C E.

WHEN Mrs. Cowley's comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem* was first announced, it occurred to the author of the following drama, that it might be a parody on Farquhar's excellent comedy of *The Beaux Stratagem*; under that idea he went to see it performed: but, instead of a faint copy, found a vivid original.

The suggestion of a parody on Farquhar had, however, so strongly impressed his imagination, that he was compelled to yield to it by producing this; which, having been favourably received nearly twenty nights on the stage, now ventures forth divested of the charms of action. The Reader will, it is presumed and hoped, in idea supply them; or, it must remain a mere dead letter: seeing, with his "mind's eye," the volatile pleasantry of Mr. Bannister, Jun. or, agreeable freedom of Mr. Fawcett, in *Frank Millclack*; the genteel rusticity of Mr. Barrymore, in *'Squire Edward*; the skilful junction of bluntness and pathos by Mr. Aickin, in *General Fairlove*; the absolute personification of avarice and cupidity by Mr. Suett, in old *Rackrent*; the becoming modesty of Mr. Benson, in *the player*; the natural humour of Mr. Wewitzer, and irresistible *vis comica* of Mr. Parsons, in the clown *Timothy*.

To complete this mental vision must be added, the fascinating vivacity of Mrs. Gibbs, in *Maria*; the unaffected sensibility of Mrs. Powell, and in-

teresting simplicity of Mrs. Kemble, in *Charlotte*; the incessant loquacity of Mrs. Hopkins, in Mrs. *Millclack*; and the unique, most perfect assumption of character, in dress, dialect, and demeanour, exhibited by Mrs. Harlowe, in the country-mawkin *Dorothy*: all of whom, not forgetting those unmentioned, are justly entitled to, and are here requested to receive, the author's warmest thanks for their several exertions to serve him.

The favour of the Manager's highly-humorous Epilogue, as humorously delivered by Mr. Bannister, Jun. merits, and receives particular acknowledgment. Mr. Barrymore's lively recitation of the Prologue proved him deserving of a better one.

Should any hyper-critic assail the author for his division of the play into four acts, Dr. Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* must be his shield. "The division of every play, into five acts, has no other foundation than common practice, and the authority of Horace.

Neve minor, neu fit quanto productior actu

Fabula.—

DE ARTE POET.

It is a division purely arbitrary. There is nothing in the nature of the composition which fixes this number rather than any other; and it had been much better if no such number had been ascertained, but every play had been allowed to divide itself into as many parts, or intervals, as the subject naturally pointed out."

To GEORGE COLMAN, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

IN obtruding a Dedication upon you, however I may offend by the deed itself, I trust I shall not by the contents; which are mere reverberations of the public voice.

THE world has long since styled you, one of the first dramatic writers of the age; your convivial wit, all who have the happiness to join the social board with you are charmed with; the politeness of your manners, and benevolence of your heart, those who derive their subsistence from you unanimously acknowledge; your judgment as a critick, and candour as a friend, I may experimentally pronounce correct and unfullied.

b

To

To such a Patron I am proud to inscribe the following Drama ; for your attention to which, and the many other favours you have conferred on both myself and son, I shall ever remain,

DEAR SIR,

Your most grateful Servant,

Francis Godolphin Waldron.

October 1, 1794.

PROLOGUE,

PROLOGUE,

BY THE AUTHOR.

SPOKEN BY MR. BARRYMORE.

HEIGHO FOR A HUSBAND! the title's not bad—
But the piece it precedes, is it merry, or sad?
That remains to be proved—meantime let's descant—
Tho' a saying so trite no explaining can want.—
At boarding-school, Miss, having enter'd her teens,
Soon learns of her elders what soft Heigho! means;
Or, at home with Mama, reading Novels so charming,
Finds her tender Heigho! grow each day more alarming:
E'en Mama, as Miss reads, can't suppress the sweet sigh;
And, were Spoufy but dead, would again Heigho! cry.
When mature, the young Lady, if nothing worse chances,
Proclaims Heigho! aloud; and to Gretna Green prances:
The prudish coy Females who thirty attain,
Cry Heigho for a Husband! at length, but in vain;
For the Men say, no, no! and, the down off the peach,
Reject what before they stood tiptoe to reach.
The Widow of Sixty, her seventh mate dead,
Cries Heigho! for an Eighth, with one tooth in her head;

A colt's tooth some call it, but I am afraid
 The owner's more properly 'titled a jade !
 All ranks it pervades too, as well as all ages ;
 Heigho for a Husband! the Peerefs engages :
 With four pearls on her coronet in her own right,
 The Baronefs fighs for five pearls day and night ;
 O, were she a Countefs, how happy her state :
 She marries an Earl, and is wretchedly great !
 Should an eye to the pocket pollute our soft scenes,
 The Author from nature to paint only means :
 From nature alone? No! he owns, and with pride,
 That Nature and Farquhar him equally guide !
 If, therefore, you track him in something well known,
 Should he copy with taste, and his prototype own,
 No plagiarist deem him, but favour the loan.

EPILOGUE,

EPILOGUE,

BY G. COLMAN, JUN. ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MR. BANNISTER, JUN.

THERE are some husbands here, as I conjecture,
Who, before now, have heard a curtain lecture—
Our curtain drawn, no lecture can be apter
Than one upon the matrimonial chapter.
I'll give you mine in brief—and let you know,
Why spinsters for a Husband cry Heigho!
Why men run mad for wives 'till they have got 'em,
I'll search you all, depend on't, to the bottom.—
How sweetly glide the hours with man and wife!
First, for a trading pair, in lower life.—
When frugal Mrs. Munns, on foggy nights,
One fat and cheerless tallow-candle lights,
When Spouse and she experience, o'er it's gloom,
The stifling transports of the small back-room,
While Dick minds shop—all topicks as they handle,
He smokes—while Dearee darns, and snuffs the candle.
“Lauk! vat a frosty night”—cries she—“I loves
“A frost—ve sells so many fur-skin gloves.—
“For my part,” then she darns—“I thinks the tax
“On gloves vas made to break poor people's backs—
“I thinks that ve vere tax'd before enough;
“Vaunt ve?”—Munn's gives a nod—then gives a puff:
“Vell, Christmas vill be here, and then you know,
“Our Jacky comes from school from Prospect-row.
“Ve'll take him to the Children in the Vood,
“Vere Bannister they say's so monstrous good.
“Shan't ve, my lovee?—that ve vill, adod!”
Munns gives another puff—but gives no nod.

“Lauk,

"Lauk, you're so glum—you never speaks, you don't—
 "Vy von't you talk a bit?"—"Because I won't."
 "You vont?"—"I won't"—"Vy, then, the divil fitch
 "Such brutes as you!"—"A brute! a brute you—hum"—
 Quit we the vulgar Spouse, whose vulgar mind
 Bids him be gross, because he can't be kind,
 And seek the Tonish pair, consign'd by fate
 To live in all the elegance of hate;
 Whose lips a coarse expression ne'er defiles,
 Who cut with coolness, and torment in smiles,
 Who prove (no rule of etiquette exceeding)
 Most perfect loathing, with most perfect breeding.
 When chance, for once, forbids my Lord to roam,
 And ties him, tête-à-tête, to dine at home,
 The cloth remov'd, then comes *ennui*, and hyp,
 The wine, his tooth-pick—and her Ladyship!
 "Pray, Ma'am"—and then he yawns—"may I require
 "When you came home?"—and then he stirs the fire—
 "I mean last night!"—"Last night?—as I'm alive
 "I scarce remember—O, to-day at five.
 "And you?"—"Faith, I forget—Hours are beneath
 "My notice, Madam"—then he picks his teeth.
 "And pray, my Lord, to-morrow, where d'ye dine?"
 "Faith, I can't tell,"—and then he takes his wine.
 Thus high and low your Lecturer explores,
 One *higher* step remains—and there he soars;
 O! would you turn where Hymen's flame divine
 In purest ray, and brightest colours shine,
 Look on the Throne—For Hymen there is proud,
 And waves his torch in triumph o'er the croud;
 There Majesty in mildness sits above,
 And gives fresh lustre to connubial love!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GENERAL FAIRLOVE,
JUSTICE RACKRENT,
'SQUIRE EDWARD,

FRANK,

TIMOTHY,

PLAYER,
WILLIAM,

CHARLOTTE,

MARIA,
MRS. MILLCLACK,
DOROTHY,
CHAMBERMAID,

Mr. Aickin.

Mr. Suett.

Mr. Barrymore.

{ Mr. Bannister, Jun.
{ Mr. Fawcett.

{ Mr. Wewitzer.
{ Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Benson,

Mr. Waldron, Jun.

{ Mrs. Powell.
{ Mrs. Kemble.

Mrs. Gibbs.

Mrs. Hopkins.

Mrs. Harlowe.

Miss Tidswell.

SCENE.—A Country Town.

TIME—An Afternoon.

HEIGHO FOR A HUSBAND!

A COMEDY.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

The Hall of an handsome Inn.

Mrs. MILLCLACK, the Landlady, in the Bar ringing.

Mrs. MILLCLACK.

JOHN! ostler! William! odd's my life, a post-chaise and four at the door, and no body to shew the company in! Where are you all!—Why, Franky, my dear! where is this son of mine?

Enter FRANK.

FRANK. Here am I, mother; what's the matter?

Mrs. MILL. The matter, child?—Why, there's company come in a post-chaise and four, and nobody to wait on them in!—Where are all the servants!

FRANK. They are only playing at bowls on the green; ring for them, mother, if you please, and I will wait on the company in the mean time. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. MILL. (ringing.) Why, William! ostler! where are you all?

B

Enter

HEIGHO FOR A HUSBAND!

Enter WILLIAM and others.

WILL. Here, Ma'am! here! here!

Mrs. MILL. Here, Ma'am! here! here!—minding nothing but play, I warrant you—company at the door, and no waiters to shew them in; fine goings on, indeed!—

WILL. We are all ready, Ma'am—We were only just—

Mrs. MILL. Well, well! don't stand chattering there; you know I don't like talkative people; all to your posts and duties.

[Re-enter FRANK, a band-box in his hand, shewing in CHARLOTTE and MARIA.]

CHAR. Where's the landlord, young man?

FRANK. There is none, Madam; my mother, Mrs. Millclack, keeps the house, and I have the honour to attend the company who frequent it.

MARIA (*aside.*) A pretty spoken young fellow.

CHAR. Is that your mother in the bar?

FRANK. Yes, Madam.

CHAR. Please to shew us into a room—see that our trunks are taken care of—and beg the favour of your mother to come to us.

FRANK. William, take this band-box, and shew the ladies into the garden-parlour.

WILL. This way, if you please, ladies.

Mrs. MILL. (*from the bar.*) Welcome, ladies! kindly welcome, ladies!

[Exeunt CHARLOTTE, MARIA, and WILLIAM.]

FRANK. Mother, you are wanted in the garden-parlour; the ladies desire to speak with you; here, ostler!—

[Exit.]

Mrs. MILL. Speak with me?—lud ha' mercy! they seem to be people of quality, and I have not had my hair drest since Sunday—Betty! bring down some hair pins, and some powder—lud ha' mercy!—that I should be taken so at unawares!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

A Parlour, looking into a Garden.

Enter CHARLOTTE, MARIA, and WILLIAM.

CHAR. Set down the band-box, and send your mistress to us, if you please, directly.

WILL. I will, Madam. [Exit.

CHAR. And now, my dear Maria, welcome here, and success to you.

MARIA. The same to you, my sweet Charlotte! and may the scheme prove as fortunate to us, as to our feign'd predecessors in stratagem, rattle-cap Archer, and his friend, Aimwell.

CHAR. But still, Maria, I cannot reconcile myself to your being the maid, and I the mistress;—let us change characters.

MARIA. By no means; you, Charlotte, were born a gentlewoman; I am, at best, but a rich man's daughter.—For this town it must be so.—If we fail here, and you then desire it, I'll "ascend the throne of rule," at the next town we remove to.

CHAR. But should we expend the little money we have, and not succeed at all?

MARIA. Why then, we'll cast away care, put on coarse linen gowns, and stuff shoes; enroll ourselves at a register-office; get good places; I'll wed the butler, you the valet; and, perhaps, be as happy as if we had married a knight and a lord.

CHAR. Ah, Maria! your spirits are much fitter for this undertaking than mine; you seem to have forgot that your unfeeling father turn'd you out of doors, because you would not marry an old and despicable wretch! but I cannot forget that my dear parent, General Fairlove, and his gallantly-acquired wealth, were so lately lost in his passage home from India!

B 2

MARIA.

MARIA. Recover yourself, my dear Lady! for so I shall henceforth call you—and put on a gayer look; I hear somebody coming.

Enter Mrs. MILLCLACK.

Mrs. MILL. I beg ten thousand pardons, your La'yships! I was rather in dishabille when you sent for me; but I made all the haste in the world to wait upon your La'yships! would your La'yships please to see our garden?—it is a perfect paradise, as a body may say—or would you chuse to see your chambers, if your La'yships intend to sleep here?—our beds are as soft as down, your La'yships; nay, they *are* down: and—

MARIA. I beg pardon, for interrupting you, Ma'am; but my Lady is very subject to the head-ach; and nothing brings it on sooner than loud and fast talking.

Mrs. MILL. (*surveying MARIA.*) O, only a servant! Very well, young woman!—(*Aside.*) I beg a million of pardons, your La'yship! would your La'yship please to have some sal volatile, or some hartshorn, or some eau de luce? they are all mighty good for the head-ach.

CHAR. I have no need of either at present, I thank you, Ma'am; I troubled you only to ask a few questions about your town, and neighbourhood.—But, first, I believe it will be prudent to speak about dinner; for we have travell'd forty miles since breakfast.

Mrs. MILL. Your La'yship's perfectly in the right; the air does create an appetite, to be sure;—would you please to have a green goose, or duck and pease? some broil'd chicken and mushrooms?—or a—

CHAR. I am not very fond of geese.

MARIA. And I never eat mushrooms for fear of being poison'd.

CHAR

CHAR. Child! servants are never permitted to give their opinion in such cases.

Mrs. MILL. O' my conscience, if they were, your La'yship, inn-keepers would have a tedious time on't!

CHAR. She was never in service before I took her, poor thing! and, as I make her my companion when we are alone, it's no wonder if she forgets herself sometimes when any body else is by.

Mrs. MILL. Then your La'yship should snub her for it; I snub all my servants, your La'yship, when they are talkative: I can't abide talkative people.

MARIA (*aside.*) Nor I; unless, like our landlady, it is myself.

CHAR. But, for our dinner, please to send in any thing most convenient; and, while 'tis dressing, be so good to favour me a little with your company.

Mrs. MILL. Your La'yship does me too much honour. (*rings.*) Here, William!

Enter WILLIAM.

WILL. Ma'am!

Mrs. MILL. Tell the cook to put down a couple of nice chicken directly; bid the gard'ner cut some fine sparrow-grass; do you take the net, run to the moat for some fish; and get every thing ready as soon as possible.

WILL. I will, Ma'am. [*Exit.*

Mrs. MILL. And now, I am entirely at your La'yship's service.

CHAR. I will first trouble you, Ma'am, with the care of my pocket book; there are some bank-notes in it; tho' not of much consequence, yet to a greater amount than I should care to lose; and, as I shall stay here 'till the return of the post from London,

London, it will be safer, perhaps, in your keeping than mine.

Mrs. MILL. It will be as safe as in the bank, your La'yship.

CHAR. And now, Ma'am, for a little chit-chat. Pray, what sort of a town is this? are the ladies very handsome, the gentlemen very gallant? have you elegant assemblies, a crowded theatre, and pleasant public walks?—are the gentry so polite and conversable as to make one wish to pass a summer with them?—or, does your beau-monde consist of card-players, scandal-mongers, and detractors; fit only to herd together, without ever being relieved from their spleen by the accidental intervention of an agreeable Londoner.

Mrs. MILL. Why, your La'yship, as to our town, it is but an old cathedral-kind of place; and, for the ladies, I don't think there's so handsome a one in it as yourself.

CHAR. O, Ma'am!

Mrs. MILL. As to the gentlemen, if they'd use my house a little more; and, when they do come, call for claret instead of port, I should not like them the worse for it: but, we have a noble assembly-room, at the gable-end of our stables; it's alter'd into a playhouse, at present, for the actors that come here every summer: then, to be sure, we have charming pleasant walks, and—

MARIA, (*untying the band-box behind.*) But, pray, are there no noblemen, who live hereabouts?

CHAR. Bless me, child! you are strangely familiar! I believe you forget that you are a servant.

Mrs. MILL. A very forward sort of body, indeed, your La'yship!

CHAR. Not but the girl has hit upon the very question

question I was going to ask, myself. Are there many titles, pray, in the neighbourhood?

Mrs. MILL. Not many, your La'yship, tho' there's plenty of 'squires, knights, and barrow-knights; but, the richest he in the county, let the others be what they will, 'squire, knight, or lord, is a miserly justice of peace, hard by; old 'Squire Rackrent;—such a skinflint; and, yet, he has a son, the finest young gentleman! who is as good as he is handsome! has no more pride than a ploughman! takes my son, Frank, a-hunting with him: to be sure, my husband, rest his ashes! was a decay'd gentleman; and, so, Frank's a gentleman born;—as for what I am worth—and he's my only child—but, that's neither here nor there—I was talking of 'Squire Edward, son to old Splitfarthing.

CHAR. Is the young gentleman married?

Mrs. MILL. No, bless your La'yship! nor like to be; for, there's not a woman, in, or about the town, gentle or simple, he has ever shewn the least inclination to—

CHAR. How old is he, pray?

Mrs. MILL. Just one-and-twenty, within a week or two;—but, I beg your La'yship's pardon—I must see that your dinner is getting ready, and every thing in order; for, tho' I should be proud to have the honour of entertaining your La'yship all day, yet a body must look after business, you know, my Lady; your La'yship's most obsequious!—dinner shall be ready in a trice—your La'yship's most indefatigable! [*Exit.*]

MARIA. O, my poor tongue! how weary art thou of lying still! I am heartily glad she's gone; for, I was as tired of her clack, as of my own silence.

CHAR. She reminds me, Maria, of “old Will Boniface, as the saying is;” and, the miser's son,
she

she has been describing, suggests ideas similar to those conceived by Aimwell, when he first heard of his Dorinda.

MARIA. And, which is still more whimsical, there seems to be the counterpart of "daughter Cherry, as the saying is," in the young fellow, Frank, who shew'd us in.

The youth, who, with a pair of sparkling eyes,
With roseate cheek, and limbs of active mould,
Can fire the guest in handing from the chaise!

CHAR. Hey day, Maria, this is making short work of it indeed!—but hush!

Enter CHAMBERMAID.

MAID. My mistress bid me ask your Ladyship, if you would please to see your chamber?

CHAR. If you please.—Come, Maria, and bring the band-box with you.

[Exeunt CHAR. and MAID.]

MARIA. Directly, my Lady! *(takes up the box.)* Yes, she'll have this young heir, I know she will; and who shall poor Maria have?—Heigho for a husband!

[Going.]

Enter FRANK.

FRANK. Say you so? egad, you deserve one; if you're as honest as handsome! *(taps her on the shoulder.)* Stop, my sweet Abigail! for such they tell me you are, or I should not presume to accost you so freely; but, 'tis a rule with me, always to make a tender of any civilities in my power, to all the ladies' maids who put up at our inn: tho', faith, I hardly know how to believe you are one; I should sooner have taken your mistress for the maid: and, upon my soul, I had rather take the maid for my mistress!

MARIA. Upon my word, that's very smartly said! and, I dare say, you think there's wit in't.

FRANK.

FRANK. That I know little about—but I'll answer for the truth of it; for, were I Grand Seignior, may the Turks be all shaved, and the Christians wear whiskers, if you shou'd not be my favourite Sultana!

MARIA. If that were the case, I should often be obliged to order some of the janissaries to bastinado their Grand Seignior, for his impertinence.

FRANK. That would be unnecessary; for, if ever I offended you, you need only frown on me, and I should be much more severely punish'd.

MARIA. That's prettily said! (*aside.*) Pray, young man, are you waiter here?

FRANK. Pray, young woman, why do you ask? don't you perceive it? am I not waiting now on you? attending your commands? requesting to know whether I am to live or die?

MARIA. Conceited! Pray, Sir, how am I to be instrumental either way?

FRANK. By saying which I shall do; you are both my judge and jury—I am arraign'd for loving you, tried, found *guilty death!*—and, nothing remains but execution, unless you extend mercy, and grant a reprieve.

MARIA. Well, upon my life, you talk smartly enough; and, I am almost at a loss how to reply.

FRANK. Then don't reply at all; let me prevent you; no method for removing the embarrassment of shame-faced lovers, who don't know what to say, like this. [*Kisses her.*]

Enter WILLIAM.

WILL. (*tittering.*) Ma'am, dinner is serv'd, and he lady desires to see you. [*Exit laughing.*]

MARIA. Why, you impudent devil!

FRANK. You beautiful angel! [*Kisses her.*]

MARIA. You, you, Waiter.

C

FRANK

FRANK. You, you, lady's maid. [*Kisses her.*
(*Bar-bell rings, and Mrs. MILLCLACK calls, without.*)

Frank! Frank!

FRANK. Coming!—one kifs more. [*Kisses her.*

MARIA. For shame! don't you hear the bell ring, and your mother call? [*Bell again.*

FRANK. Coming!—one more. [*Kisses her.*

MARIA. You wicked devil! never dare to speak to me again as long as you live! [*Exit.*

FRANK. You bewitching little devil too! for you have set me all on fire! (*Bell again.*) Coming! coming! [*Exit.*

End of Act the First.

A C T II.

SCENE I.

Old RACKRENT'S House.

Enter EDWARD and FRANK.

EDWARD. **T**WO, do you say, Frank?

FRANK. Ay, 'Squire Edward; and a brace of the finest girls that ever were kifs'd, if I may be allow'd a good taster—tho', faith, to tell truth, I speak of one only by guefs: but, t'other little rogue I smack'd, and smack'd again.

EDW. Pho! a couple of traders only; on their way to a horse-race, or some such market for the wares they deal in.

FRANK

FRANK. Why, faith, the one I made free with, does, in some sort, answer your idea; but, the other appears to be what it is very difficult to assume, the woman of fashion; easy without familiarity, elegant without affectation, and beautiful without paint!

EDW. You are a lively rogue, Frank; but, take my word for it, they are no better than I have said; let's talk no more of them.—What shall we do this evening? I am rather in a pensive mood; let's angle an hour or two.—I'll take honest Izaak Walton in my pocket; then there will be three of us—for, compliment apart—though your company is extremely pleasant and agreeable, Frank, I sometimes wish for more variety; but, my churlish father denies me any other.—Strange! that a man of his fortune should so mope and immure himself and son!

FRANK. It is indeed, master Edward.

EDW. I'll not go out at all, this evening—I am melancholy, Frank! I'll finish reading Hammond's tender elegies, or play some of the divine pieces of Corelli.

FRANK. Why, you *are* melancholy.—I have perceived it growing on you some time;—and, you don't go the way to be otherwise; for, except a little hunting, you do nothing to exhilarate: nor, has even the chase that effect upon you;—for, tho' you follow it as exercise, when others are hallooing, you are always *sad* at the *death*. Now, one of the girls, I told you of, would make you quite another creature! if they are merely what you suppose, half an hour's flirtation would at least amuse you.

EDW. You know, Frank, I never delighted in such company.

FRANK. But, 'Squire, should she, who appears a

woman of fashion, really prove so; a suitable match, and a girl to your mind? let me tell you, an elegant young wife, a town-house, and the pleasures of London, would soon make you as different from what you are now, as a cloudy pipe of wine, when first imported, is to a clear bumper of the same, fill'd to the health of some beautiful lass.

EDW. Well, Frank, I think I'll take your advice; but, I should like to know who and what they are, if possible, before——

[*Old RACKRENT coughs without.*
Hush! here's my father.

FRANK. Ay, here comes the old cock, sure enough! and in the same feather!—Will he never moult, I wonder!—What a covering is there for the worshipful Justice Rackrent!

Enter Old RACKRENT and DOROTHY.

RACK. Don't tell me, huffey!—new wristbands and collars?—why, I have not worn those shirts above nine years; how can they want mending already!

DOR. And taylor say it be a moral impossible to darn elbows o' coat you sent un this morn, no more; a' says as how, your worship had better ha' a new one.

RACK. The taylor's a knave, and you're a fool—if he can't darn it, let him patch it; it's only to wear in my own grounds, not to go to court in! Oh, Edward, are you there!—I had forgot—it will serve him, and save me any more expence, as he's so near of age! (*Aside.*) You are fond of hunting, Edward, and, as I begrudge you no reasonable diversion—that costs me nothing! (*Aside.*) I permit it, but I observ'd t'other day, that the coat you ride in is too good for the purpose.—There's a coat of mine at the taylor's,
with

with only just the nap worn off, will make you an excellent hunting-frock; and you may put the other by for Sundays.

EDW. Sir, I am greatly obliged to you, but the clothes I have will serve me very well till I am of age; when my late uncle's liberality will prevent my being any longer troublesome to you.

RACK. Ah! you had need to have your uncle's estate, Edward, for you take after him exactly. I remember, in particular, your uncle was very fond of finery.—Upon my going once to see him in London, he said he wonder'd that I would appear in so shabby a suit of clothes!—Lord, brother, says I, what signifies how I am dress'd? nobody knows me here!—and, on his visiting me soon after in the country, he express'd the like surprise at my being (as he phras'd it) so meanly apparell'd! but I replied partly as before;—what signifies how I am dress'd?—every body knows me here!—so, Edward, between every body and nobody, I make any coat serve, and keep my money in my pocket.

FRANK. An admirable reply, indeed, Sir!—how I admire your Worship's wisdom and œconomy!

RACK. What, Francis! are you here too? I am glad to see you—I prefer you for a companion to my son before all the coxcombs in the county; he can keep company with him at a small expence! (*aside*) D'ye hear, Francis?—I love to encourage people in trade, that are industrious, and pay their landlord punctually, as your mother does me; send me a pint of raisin-wine, as soon as you go home. I'll pay for it—that is—I'll deduct it out of the next quarter's rent!—And now to gage the barrel, to see what my mowers have drunk to-day; for, if I don't look sharp after them, I shall be ruin'd in the single article of small-beer! [*Exit.*

FRANK.

FRANK. What a muckworm!—

EDW. 'Tis too true, Frank;—but still he is my father!

DOR. Lord, your honour, I hardly knows how to think it; for, he be no more like you nor a cuckoo's like a nightingale; and I be sure you be no more like he, nor a pleasant May be like to a hard January! [Exit.

FRANK. A notable discovery, dame Dorothy has made!—but to return to our subject, Squire,—as you wish to know more of the lasses at our Inn, before you introduce yourself to them; one being only *suivante* to the other, suppose you were to bid Dorothy invite my little Hebe to drink tea with her;—no unprecedented thing, I assure you—give Doll a hint to pump her about her mistress; and I'll bet a hoghead of claret to your father's pint of raisin-wine, you'll know her whole history presently.

EDW. I don't dislike the idea: Dorothy!—I'll only just bid her invite the girl before you, and explain myself farther to her afterwards.—Dorothy!

Enter DOROTHY.

DOR. Did your honour please to call?

EDW. Yes, Dorothy; my friend, Frank, has been telling me, that there is a lady of fashion, and a genteel young woman, her companion, just arriv'd from London, at his house; who mean to stay two or three days; now, as we live so far from the metropolis, and my father keeps no company, I think, Dorothy, you should avail yourself of such a circumstance; and get Mrs. Millclack to present your compliments to the Lady's attendant, and, if she has leisure, request the favour of her company to drink tea with you this afternoon; by which means you'll learn the London modes, and the

the Tôn, as they call it: and by making a proper use of this and other such opportunities, in case of my father's death, or my marriage, qualify yourself for a better situation in more fashionable families.

DOR. Certain fure, your honour, I shou'd like to larn the tone perdigiously! but one ha' gotten so few oppertunities here.—

EDW. Therefore, I say, embrace the present one; there is money, Dorothy; get some fine tea and sugar, for the Londoners are rather nice, and some ratafia, or any think you thing proper; and make the lady's lady welcome.

DOR. That I will, your honour! thank your honour! you be so good! but I always said as how your father and you warn't same flesh and blood! dear heart, how pure this be! now I shall larn the tone!—Oh Lord!—Oh Lord! [Exit.

FRANK. Bravo, 'Squire Edward! but this is only to *hear* about the lady—I have just thought how you may probably *see* her too; accidentally, as it were; and judge for yourself.

EDW. How? where?—egad, Frank, I begin, I don't know why, to grow anxious about her.

FRANK. Why, this is play-night at our assembly-room theatre; the manager, and some of the actors, are now taking their afternoon-glasses at our house; I'll immediately join the Thespians, and persuade them to solicit the lady to take places for this evening; if she does, you can then—

EDW. Say no more, Frank, I conceive you entirely; and the moment she has, do you secure me a seat next her's—about it directly: and, in the mean time I'll instruct Dorothy.

FRANK. I'll not lose a moment: for I long, 'Squire, to see you fast lock'd in Cupid's clutches!

[Exeunt *severally*.

SCENE

SCENE II.

A Dining Room at the Inn.

CHARLOTTE and MARIA *discovered, as having dined.—Wine and Fruit before them.*

MARIA. Well, my dear, how do you find yourself by this time, are you tired of the frolic, and inclined to return to London; or, as we have rush'd into the middle of the stream at once, shall we boldly proceed? since, to return is worse, I fear, than going on.

CHAR. Why, my dear Maria! I have very little inclination to return; for, to continue the metaphor, we might not regain footing on the shore we have left; and yet, without rudder or compass, how, or which way to steer, I am utterly ignorant.

MARIA. In the first place, what will you call yourself; the countess of Quinze, marchioness Matadore, or duchess of Diamonds? ha! ha! ha!

CHAR. O, neither! for, as the talkative fool, who arrogates superior understanding, is generally found as much below what he pretends to be, as, if silent, he might have been thought above what he really is; so, the more we assume, the easier and more likely will be our detection; let us, therefore, only pass for a young lady, whose fortune is in her own hands, and her attendant; on their journey to—no matter where—and it will then be impossible we should be proved impostors.

MARIA. But, what shall our names be?

CHAR. E'en what they really are; they are not known here, and will serve us quite as well as fictitious ones. (*a tapping is heard at the door.*) Come in, pray.

Enter

Enter FRANK.

FRANK. I beg pardon, Madam, for this intrusion ; but, there is a gentleman without, who, having a favour to request, begs to be permitted to speak with you.

CHAR. What can this mean, Maria? [*Aside.*

MARIA. I'll be whipt if I can guess; but, there can be no harm in knowing.—How demure the impudent rogue looks! [*Aside.*

CHAR. Well, Sir, being a female of fortune and character, I confide in your prudence, as son to the mistress of the house, not to introduce any improper person;—pray, shew the gentleman in; and, be so good as to stay in the room while he is here.

FRANK. Please to walk in, Sir.

Enter a PLAYER.

FRANK. This, Madam, is the gentleman I mention'd—these, Sir, are the ladies you desired to be introduced to.

PLAYER. Ladies, your most obedient!—I have the honour to wait on you from the company of comedians here, to solicit the favour of your presence this evening at our theatre. [*Presents a play-bill.*

CHAR. (*looking it over.*) Pray, Sir, (*to Frank*) have you a good company of comedians here?

FRANK. I think we have, Madam; and this gentleman in particular, who has quitted (perhaps imprudently) one of the liberal professions for that of a player, is allowed to be a very excellent actor.

PLAYER. I should blush, Sir, at what you are pleased to say of me; but that, as an alloy to your unmerited compliment, you advert to the *lib ra!* profession I quitted; that it is highly respectable, the epithet bestowed on it is a proof; but, considered

D

candidly,

candidly, what profession is more liberal than that of "the well-trod stage!"

"If Jonson's *learned Sock* be on,
 "Or *sweetest Shakespear*, *Fancy's child*,
 "Warble his native wood-notes wild."

For, I am bold to say, that, to be an intelligent, accomplished, and affecting actor, a man must possess more natural and acquired endowments, than are requisite to any one profession besides.—But, I beg pardon, ladies, for this freedom.

CHAR. Pray, Sir, make no apology; for, indeed, so far as I can presume to judge, I am entirely of your opinion; and am so prepossess'd, in favour of the stage by what you have said, that I shall certainly have the pleasure of seeing the performance this evening.—Do me the favour, therefore, Sir, to secure good places for myself and this young gentlewoman.

PLAYER. Immediately, Madam!—and, I trust that you will have the goodness to overlook any deficiency of accommodation or splendour in our temporary theatre; wherein our chief recommendation must be an ardent wish to please.

CHAR. Are you the manager of the company, Sir?

PLAYER. A performer only, Madam; the honour I now have in waiting on you, more properly belongs to the manager himself; but, he generally deposes me, pretending that he is shame-faced: and I freely confess myself possess'd of so much effrontery, as to be ashamed of few things, except dishonesty, impiety, cowardice, and inhumanity!

FRANK. And he, who can plead not guilty to those indictments, may bid defiance to almost every other accusation.

CHAR. I cannot but wonder, Sir, to find a person

for of your imputed merit, buried in the obscurity of a provincial theatre;—would not London be the more proper sphere for the display of your talents?

PLAYER. Perhaps not, Madam; the trifling talents I possess, which appear with some degree of lustre among my brethren of the sock and buskin in the country, might in the metropolis be entirely dimm'd by stars of greater magnitude; nor can every actor, however meritorious, be received there.—

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
 “ The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 “ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 “ And waste——”

But, I fear I intrude;—ladies, your most obedient! I will have the honour to secure your places immediately.—Your most obedient! [Exit.

CHAR. Upon my word, a very genteel, agreeable young man!

FRANK. Yes, Madam; and as worthy as he is agreeable.—He has a wife, too, the counterpart of himself, both in manners and merit; who has very recently made him a father.

CHAR. Indeed! I should be happy in administering to their comfort.—I will go and speak with your mother about her instantly. [Exit.

FRANK. Well, faith, your young lady is extremely good, and immensely handsome? or the beams of benevolence make her appear so.—Were I not irrecoverably in love with you, Maria, I believe I should be impudent enough to adore her; but I am so dazzled with the sun-shine of your bright eyes, that I am blind as a beetle to the lustre of any other.

MARIA. O, you'll soon recover your sight, I warrant! the dazzling sun-shine of my eyes will be no sooner withdrawn, than you'll see elegance

in a dowdy, youth in the climacterick, and the fairness of Phillis in a sun-burnt gypsey.

FRANK. No, faith! for, flattery and rhodomontade apart, I like you.

MARIA. You like me!—civil, and concise! and, pray, what do you like me *for*, Mr. Francis?

FRANK. *For?* that's a plaguy blunt question!—why, for what Adam liked Eve for; what my father liked my mother for; what the devil else should I like you for?

MARIA. Well, upon my word, you are a bold man, to offer marriage to a girl you know nothing of; and never saw till within these two hours.

FRANK. Marriage!

MARIA. Aye—did not you say you liked me for what your father liked your mother for? meaning, I suppose, a wife; as I presume, Mr. Francis, you were born in wedlock.

FRANK. Zounds, what an artful baggage! I must look sharp, or I may be taken in here! [*Aside.* Hold, hold, my little lapwing! you are for running over head and ears in debt at once; you should think of paying what you already owe me, before you begin a fresh score.

MARIA. Owe you! why, pray, Mr. Francis, what do I owe you?

FRANK. Half a hundred kisses, huffey! I lent you before dinner; and which I insist on the repayment of, before we make any new contract.

MARIA. No, I vow to Venus you gave them to me! and against my will too.

FRANK. That I flatly deny: for, if you did not receive them with as much pleasure as I gave them, may I never feel the returning pressure of a plump lip again!

MARIA. There! now you confess you gave them,

FRANK.

FRANK. Well, no matter! I am determined to have them again; and, if you won't restore them freely, I must c'en take them by force; so, my charming Maria! (*kisses her.*) Nectarines and violets!

[*Kisses her again.*]

Enter Mrs. MILLCLACK.

Mrs. MILL. Heyday! son Frank!—are you going to devour the young woman?—O' my conscience, you are just such another as your father before you!

MARIA. (*aside.*) Lud ha' mercy on me! I shall drop down with shame!

FRANK. Only a harmless game o'romps, mother, that's all!—Egad, Maria, (*aside to her*) you must make the best you can of it, for I must decamp; but, remember, I have not had all my kisses back yet.

[*Exit.*]

MARIA. Get along, you impudent devil!

Mrs. MILL. Oh, what, you have sneak'd off, ha?—you have some decency, then, before your mother? I don't know how to be angry with him, neither; he's father's own son! and, by my troth, I like him the better for't!—Why, you have let my rudesby pull you about most unmercifully, child:—a game o'romps with a vengeance!—but, I come with a message to you from a stranger.

MARIA. A message to me, Ma'am?

Mrs. MILL. Yes, to you; only think, my dear, how civil our town's-folk are to you Londoners; here have you been in the house but an hour or two, and the arrival of a lady of quality, and her attendant, being buzzed about, an invitation is already sent you, to drink tea with Justice Rackrent's housekeeper this afternoon; her ladyship will be invited by all our gentry soon, I warrant.

MARIA. Bless me, Ma'am, you don't say so?
I am

I am exceedingly obliged to her—and, indeed, I am quite ashamed of your son's behaviour; but I hope, Ma'am, you won't think the worse of me for it?

Mrs. MILL. O, not at all, child! I have no notion of a squeamish piece of mock-modesty. I don't mean, tho', that I'd have you be naughty;—no, no, child! heaven forbid!—but, “better give a fool a kiss than be troubled with him,” was always my maxim.—But, what answer shall I send to the justice's? his man, Timothy, waits without.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

CHAR. The justice!—what's the business, Maria? [*Aside.*]

MARIA. Hush! (*aside to Char.*) O, Ma'am, the gentlewoman of the house, here, has been kind enough to bring me an invitation, to drink tea, this afternoon, with Justice Rackrent's house-keeper (the old gentleman, whose son she prais'd so, before dinner;) and, if you have no particular commands for an hour or so, I would beg leave, Ma'am, to accept the invitation. (*aside to Char.*) Bid me go, by all means!

CHAR. Why, you know, Maria, I am going to the play this evening; however, be sure to return time enough to help me dress, and——

Mrs. MILL. Lord, your La'yship! you are vastly well as you are; that riding-dress becomes you mightily! and, travellers are not expected to be drawn forth in their best bib and tucker, like the town's folk.

CHAR. Well, I'll think of that.—You may go, Maria.

MARIA. Thank you, Madam!—then, if you please,

please, Ma'am, (*to Mrs. MILL.*) tell the man, if he'll conduct me, I'll wait on the gentlewoman presently.

CHAR. And I have made up a small parcel, with a few lines enclosed, apologizing for the liberty I have taken, which I shall be obliged by your sending to the gentleman's wife we were speaking of, directly.

Mrs. MILL. This very moment, your Ladyship!—Ah, bless your dear, kind heart! you are a pattern for your sex. [*Exit.*]

CHAR. What can be the meaning of this odd invitation, Maria? and, why were you so anxious to accept it?

MARIA. Why, my sweet girl! I'll lay my life, the young 'squire has either heard of, or seen you; and this is the casual counterpart of Scrub's invitation to Archer.

CHAR. Impossible! but go, my dear Maria! and, should it be as you suspect, improve this opportunity to the utmost, I conjure you!

MARIA. Never fear me! if you are not married, and myself too, within a week; ay, and to advantage; may I die an old maid, and be buried with my face downward! [*Exeunt.*]

End of Act the Second.

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE I.

*Old RACKRENT's House.**DOROTHY discovered, setting out Tea-Things.*

DOROTHY.

WELL, I was ne'er so pleased in all my life! that 'Squire Edward should have such a 'pinion of my cuteness and fadility, to trust me wi' such a secret! for I does love to be trusted wi' secrets, that's certain;—and, I dan't know, in the main, considering what a' wants to find out, if a' cou'd ha' done better:—for, thof I be but a country body, and not over-larn'd, they that hangs I for a fool, may find a knave i' the halter!—I'fe warrant I be as cunning as some that pertend to be wiser; and if I dan't sift and pump this Londoner, an' she comes, out of her lady's whole parentation, may I ne'er be trusted wi' a secret again!—I think I ha' gotten all in apple-pye order, to receive her; and a nice drop of ratafia in the beaufet, if there shou'd be 'casion for it, to open her heart, and set her tongue a-going.—

[A door is heard to open, without.]

But, here she comes, I've a notion! *[Looking out.]* Ay, it be she and Timothy, sure enough! and a good likely body she be; thof she han't gotten quite such a colour in her cheeks as I have.

Enter TIMOTHY.

TIM. Mrs. Dorothy, here's the Londonshire gentlewoman, belike, from Mrs. Millclack's, come to see you.

DOR.

DOR. O that's well! desire the gentlewoman to walk in, Timothy; and bring tea-kettle and lamp directly.

TIM. An' please you, Ma'am, to walk this way.

Enter MARIA.

Ecod, she's a smart wench; and almost as pratty as our Doll. (*aside.*) [*Exit:*

DOR. (*curtseying formally.*) Your servant, Mem!

MARIA. Your's, Ma'am, most thankfully!—Mrs. Millclack did me the favour to deliver your kind invitation, to take a dish of tea with you this afternoon; and I have done myself the pleasure, Ma'am, to wait on you.

DOR. O dear, yes, Mem; I did say as how you'd be kindly welcome; and so, to be sure, you be! won't you please to take a chair? (*banding one*) do, Mem, sit ye down—the tea is i' the pot—I'll make it immediately; Timothy, bring in tea-kettle and lamp! pray ye, Mem, sit ye down; do ye, now! [*Officiously forcing her to sit.*

MARIA. I thank you, Ma'am. [*Sits.*

Enter TIMOTHY, with an old-fashion'd tea-kettle and lamp.

TIM. Here it be, mistress Dorothy!—it be main hot!—take care it don't burn your pratty fingers! and now I mun go look after the mowers. [*Exit.*

DOR. These-un tea-kettles and lamps be mighty handy in summer: (*making tea*) I dan't know whether you ha' gotten any such like contrivances in London, Mem?

MARIA. Something to answer the same purpose, Ma'am.

DOR. O, no doubt on't!—all sorts o' things, I suppose, be to be had in London. Dan't ye chuse no bread and butter, Mem? 'tis our own baking

E

and

and churning, I do assure you ; do ye now, take a bit.

[*Holding a slice between her fingers:*

MARIA. I'll take a cup of tea first, if you please, Ma'am,

DOR. To be sure, Mem ; certainly ; by all means ; you shall chuse for yourself : I'll gi' ye a cup o' tea in a minute o' time.

[*Pours out the tea, and puts sugar and cream in both cups.*

I beg your pardon, tho', Mem, we country folk ben't so perlite ; I ought to ha' ax'd first, an' you like sugar and cream ?

MARIA. I thank you, Ma'am, I do.

DOR. Then, pray you, teake some more.—(*puts more of both into MARIA's cup—bites a lump of sugar, and puts part into each cup*) 'twas our red cow's morn's milk the cream com'd off ; and the sugar's double defin'd ; and the tea is the finest green gunpowder, I do assure you ! cost ten shilling a pound.

MARIA. 'Tis extremely good, indeed, Ma'am ; (*sipping her tea*) and the heartiness of your welcome gives an additional flavour to it.

DOR. Well, certain sure, you Londoners be so perlite ! (*rises, and curtsies*) but, lack-a-day, it be no wonder ; living wi' duchesses, and countesses, and marquisses !—why, I suppose now, your leady, from what I ha' heard, canno' be less nor a countess, or a marquiss, at least.

MARIA (*aside.*) Just as I suspected ; and now for it !—no, indeed, Ma'am ; my lady has no title as yet :—that she may be a countess, perhaps a duchess, is not unlikely ; but, at present, she is only a private gentlewoman, just come of age ;—her father being lately dead, and she sole heiress, she's worth—I can't tell how much ! and all she has is in her own possession. But I beg this may go no farther.

DOR.

DOR. Dear heart! not for the varfal world, Mem! (*afide*) here'd be a match for 'Squire Edward!—and, pray ye, now, what fort an a temper'd body may she be?

MARIA. An angel!—an absolute angel!—why, Ma'am, there's not a week goes over her head, but she fays to me, in the sweeteft tone you can imagine,—Maria, my dear, you may take that polonefe, or York-robe, or pierrot, or whatever drefs it happens to be; and, perhaps, it is not a pin worfe than the firft day she put it on.

DOR. She must be an angel indeed! I wifh I had fuch an a miftrefs, then I might get polonies, and peros, and cork-robos too! well, who knows! (*afide*) I warrant ye, now, she ha' gotten a power of fuiters?

MARIA. Out of number, Ma'am; but she can't find one to her mind in London; for, she prefers the pure manners of the country gentlemen, and the true felicity of rural retirement, to all the racket of high life, the flutter or infenfibility of town fops, flimfy lords, and military coxcombs.

DOR. And, by my truly, she be i' the right on't. (*Afide.*) O, she were made for 'Squire Edward! won't you chufe, Ma'am, to tafte a drop of cordial I have at hand, to qualify your tea, as we fayn? it be mild as mother's milk, I do affure you.

MARIA. By no means, Ma'am! be it ever fo weak, it would fet my tongue a-running at fuch a rate, that I fhould tell every thing I know prefently.

DOR. (*afide.*) That be the very thing I do want.

Enter Old RACKRENT.

RACK. Hey-dey! Dorothy! what's here to do? drinking tea in an afternoon!—no wonder I fhould want money!—and, what gill-flirt is this you have

got with you, eh!—who are you, vixen! who are you, trollop? [To Maria.]

MAR. O, Lord, the old fellow will beat me, sure. [Aside.]

DOR. Dear heart, your worship! dan't ye go to affront the young woman!—she be a very honest, good sort an a body, indeed, lately com'd from London;—and so, your worship, I made bold to invite her to come and drink a dish of tea wi' me, (and I bought it out of my own pocket) to—to—get her to larn me newest fashion for plaiting your worship's and 'Squire Edward's shirts.

RACK. (*surveying Maria.*) Hum! are you sure she's honest?

DOR. Yes, Sir, yes! ben't you honest?

[To Maria.]

MARIA. I hope so!

RACK. I shan't take your word;—I must examine her myself: go, go, about your business, Dorothy; go! iron the shirts as you used to do; I want no kick-shaw—gew-gaw fashions, not I.—Go!—

DOR. Lud ha' mercy! what shall I do? I had best run and tell 'Squire Edward; for fear ould measter should be a little rumbustical wi' her, as a' wanted to be wi' me one day! (*aside.*) [Exit.]

MARIA. If you please, Sir, I'll follow Mrs. Dorothy—I am very sorry that my being here is disagreeable to you; but, I assure you, Sir, I was invited, or I should not have presumed— [Going.]

RACK. Stay, stay, pretty-face!—I was but in jest—I am not angry; I only pretended it, to send Dorothy away.—Come, sit down, and pour me out a dish of tea.—I have no objection to tea—when it costs me nothing; (*aside*) nor to a pretty girl either! nay, I don't mind giving a trifle for that.

[Aside.]

MARIA,

MARIA. I protest, Sir, I am in such a twitter!—sure the old fool is not going to be amorous.

[*Aside.*

RACK. A twitter? psha, nonsense! od, you have a delicate white hand, pretty-face!—and it's as soft—

[*Squeezing her hand.*

MARIA. Pray, Sir!—you hurt me, Sir!—

RACK. Ah, you baggage! you are not so soon hurt! come, give me a kiss, pretty-face!—here, here's half-a-crown for you—perhaps, if you behave properly, I may make it up half-a-guinea;—a great deal of money as times go!

MARIA. Sir, I trust I shall always behave properly; and I hope you will do the same.—Ugh!—the filthy wretch!

[*Aside.*

RACK. O, depend upon me!—come, then, one sweet—

[*Attempting to kiss her.*

Enter FRANK and EDWARD at opposite Sides.

FRANK. Is 'Squire Edward at home?

EDW. Ay, Frank, here am I.—Heyday! is my father in one of his amorous moods?

FRANK. And with my little tit too?—but, that won't do.

[*Goes behind old Rackrent, unperceived by him, while he is contending with Maria, and slaps him on the shoulder; separating him from her: Rackrent drops the half-crown.*

FRANK. I am sorry to spoil sport, your worship! but, as I don't think, tho' you are a magistrate, you can produce a qualification, according to Love's game act, I must inform you, that you are poaching upon my manor.

RACK. (*confused.*) Uh! uh!—hem! your manor?—Sir, I must tell you, that you are very impertinent! (*EDW. comes forward.*) Uh! uh! and you, son Edward, are very undutiful, to pry into your father's—um! um! I can't find my half-

half-crown! (*aside to Maria.*) Mum! another time; you understand me!—for the present, think of the sum of money I mention'd—so, good b'ye, pretty-face!—Oh, what a delightful, delicate, delicious little rogue it is! [*Exit.*]

FRANK. Ha! ha! ha! I just came in the nick, egad! or the toothless old hound would have so mumbled my little leveret!

EDW. Indeed, Frank, your leveret, as you call her, has had a narrow escape; my father has been a wag in his time!

MARIA. O, Lord, he's a terrible old fellow!—pray, Sir, let me begone, while I am well; do, Mr. Francis, be so good, as soon as I have adjusted myself, to see me safe home to my lady.

[*MARIA turns to a looking-glass.*]

FRANK. Your lady is gone a-walking, Maria;—and I came to tell you of it, 'Squire; (*apart to him*) in case you had a mind to throw yourself in her way, before she is drest out for the play, which she has taken places for; and have a fight of her, unadorn'd, by day-light.

EDW. The thing I wish! I have overheard the discourse between this girl and Dorothy; and am entirely satisfied with it!—where is she walking!

FRANK. In the grove, behind the cathedral.

EDW. Enough! please, my dear, (*to Maria*) to accept this trifling recompence for the old gentleman's freedom. [*Offers her money.*]

MARIA. I humbly thank you, Sir! but, if my own pride did not forbid my acceptance of what you are pleased to offer me, my lady's positive injunctions would. (*Aside*) Now am I convinced he was at the bottom of the invitation!

EDW. Strange! but I have no time to waste.—Frank, with me success, you dear rogue, if I accost her!

[*Aside to him.*]

FRANK.

FRANK. Speed the plough, with all my heart, say I!—

[Exit EDWARD.]

Come, Maria, as your lady is abroad, instead of going straight home, will you trust yourself for half an hour's faunter with me?

MARIA. But, will you promise to behave yourself prettily if I do? and not haul me about, as the old fellow has just now done; and as you did before and after dinner?

FRANK. Why, rather than you should refuse me, I will; and also promise not to kiss you above once in five minutes.

MARIA. O, if you don't kiss me oft'ner than that, I would not give a pin for your company!

FRANK. Bravo! my billing turtle! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

A Grove.

Enter CHARLOTTE, from the upper End of the Stage.

CHAR. Turn which way I will, 'tis a most delightful scene!—Thus retired, let me reflect a little upon the project I am engaged in; but, will it bear reflection?—I fear not!—A young unthinking female, of family, and, not long since, of fortune, having lost her parents and her patrimony, quits the protection of her remaining friends in London; and, accompanied by another girl, more thoughtless than herself, traverses the country, fortune-hunting: that is, with a predetermined design to rob any young man, with simplicity and wealth, of half his riches, and, perchance, all his future happiness. Despicable scheme!

scheme! and can I, thus reflecting on its baseness, persevere in it?—Oh, Charlotte! if thou can'st, thy parent, fortune, honour, were at once engulf'd! and nothing hath escap'd but this frail, shatter'd wreck; in which, nor worth, nor safety can be found! [Exit.

Enter EDWARD.

EDW. It must be she! there is a symmetry in that shape, an elegance in that deportment, which none but the charmer described to me can possess!—If her manners and sentiments accord but with her form—if?—they must! I am sure they do.—How shall I accost her? I am so mere a novice, that, should I, when I behold her beauty, love her, I fear I shall not dare to tell her so! Ha! yonder, I think, 's our Timothy;—a thought occurs may probably—yet, 'tis ridiculous! and may expose me to contempt! but, I'll venture.—Timothy! (*calling him.*)—Yes, he shall change clothes with me;—then, as a simple peasant, I may observe her nearer: and, perhaps, obtain that knowledge of her mind and manners, my proper garb and character might keep me long a stranger to.—Ho! Timothy!

Enter TIMOTHY.

TIM. Did you call me, Measter Yedward?

EDW. Ay, Timothy; did you meet Frank Mill-clack that way lately?

TIM. Noa, Measter Yedward; but I met a main pratty thing that way, but now.

EDW. A main pretty thing! What's it like, Timothy?

TIM. Why, when first I saw its jacket, I thought it like a man; and when I look'd down at it's petticoat, I thought it like woman; but
when

when I look'd up in it's face, I thought it the most like an angel of any thing I e'er com'd nigh.

EDW. O, I understand you ;—you mean a lady in a riding-dress, who pass'd that way just now :—upon my word, Timothy, you have described her in a very gallant manner.

TIM. Anan?—a galant leady! what's that, Measter Yedward?

EDW. Pho! no matter ;—I wanted you about something else.—Frank and I are going a-fishing, perhaps I may have occasion to ford the stream during our sport ;—I forgot to put on my fishing-frock, and have not time to go home for it ;—prithee, lend me your cloaths, Timothy, and put on mine the while.

TIM. Ay, Measter Yedward, that I will.—I'd change cloaths with you for good and all, if you desired it, thof mine were the better of the two.

EDW. Thank you, Timothy! step behind these trees, then, lest somebody shou'd pass by, and we'll do it in a trice; make haste; I expect Frank every minute.

TIM. But, are you certain sure, Measter Yedward it was only a leady I met?—it look'd woundedly like an angel!

EDW. No, Timothy, I am not quite certain ;—I only saw her back, and she appear'd but a lady: when I see her face, it is not impossible that I shall think her an angel too! [*Exeunt.*]

Enter FRANK and MARIA.

MARIA. But, if this is the grove my lady is walking in, why don't you go some other way? there are pleasant meadows yonder, where they are hay-making; let us walk there.

FRANK. Well, my dear girl, so will ;—but, we

F

are

are obliged to cross the end of the grove to get at the meadows; we shall come to the haycocks presently; and will tumble 'em rarely, I warrant.

MARIA. The haycocks! what does the fool mean?

FRANK. Why, to finish the game o'romps my mother interrupted, to be sure.

MARIA. That you will not, believe me! To be plain, Master Francis, you are a lively, agreeable young fellow, I confess; you have said that you like me; and I make no scruple to own that I like you: but, tho' I am only a servant, and you are heir, as your mother intimates, to something considerable, notwithstanding the freedom I have thus far permitted you, these are maxims I never shall depart from;—no, parson, no passion!—no ring, no romping! and, now I perceive your drift, Sir, no marriage, no meadows!

FRANK. And would you really persuade me, Maria, to marry you?

MARIA. Not I, indeed, Sir!—my tongue shall never persuade to what your heart does not incite you!—but, I am young, some say pretty, virtuous, good-temper'd, and industrious; if these are not qualities estimable enough to entitle me to be an inn-keeper's wife, you may look farther and fare worse!—I have no money, I grant;—that is, only a trifle saved in service, not worth mentioning; you have a good deal, and that's the same thing: for, if one of us have it, no matter which; but that it gives the possessor the delight of bestowing!—and, could we change conditions, I honestly assure you, the paltry consideration of a little cash should not prevent my saying to you, I, Maria, take thee, Francis! for better for worse, for rich or for poor: I have enough, and the richest have no more!

FRANK.

FRANK. Egad, Maria, you almost pose me!—I—I don't know what to say: that I like, nay love you, is positive;—but, marriage is such a plaguy old-fashion'd——. Zounds, who have we here?—some of old Rackrent's people; this way, my dear girl, to the meadows, and there we'll talk farther.

MARIA. No! I have chang'd my mind about walking at all, now; my lady will want to dress for the play: so, you may go to the meadows, and tumble the haycocks by yourself; and I wish you much sport, Mr. Francis! [Exit.

FRANK. Plague o' this girl! I don't know what to make of her! but this I know; that, tho' I like her exceedingly, of all my mad frolicks, matrimony shall be the last!—Tumble the haycocks by myself? Yes, that's pretty sport to be sure!

[Exit.

Re-enter EDWARD and TIMOTHY, in each other's cloaths.

TIM. Ha! ha! ha!—never stir Measter Yedward, if I can help laughing, to see you so transmogrified!—

EDW. And I can't help admiring how smart and genteel you look, Timothy.

TIM. Do I, Measter Yedward?—waundlikins! I am glad of it; I have wanted to look smart and jonteel ever since I fall'd in love with our Dorothy.

EDW. I am sure if she saw you in that dress, Timothy, she could not resist you.

TIM. Do you think so, Measter Yedward?—then if I don't go hoame, and fall a courting her directly, may I never be dressed out again as long as I live.

EDW. Do so, Timothy; and call, in your way,

at the hair-dresser's; bid him be sure to send within this half-hour to dress me for the play.

TIM. This half-hour! why, you can't have fish'd much by then?

EDW. No matter; go, and do as I bid you.

TIM. I wull, Sir, I wull.—Ha! ha! ha!—the play, quotha! ecod, in my mind, you look like one of the shew-folks, when they be disguised, yourself; you be so waundily transmogrified! ha! ha! ha! [Exit.

EDW. And now to overtake the object of my pursuit!—But, stay—somebody is just come out of the hazle-copse, she went toward, and is turning this way;—'tis herself!—now to adapt my manners to my dress. [Saunters about, and whistles.

Re-enter CHARLOTTE.

CHAR. Yes, it shall be so; I'll return to-morrow:—make the most prudent use of what money I shall have left—and, tho' my future life be e'er so mean, it shall not be dishonest! But, whither have I wander'd? 'tis time I shou'd return;—Maria will be at the inn before me, and wonder at my absence:—which is the way?—I think I pass'd thro' this part of the grove before.—I'll enquire of this countryman.—Pray, honest friend, be so good to inform a stranger, which path leads to the post-house in the town?

EDW. (*aside.*) A wonder!—An't please you, Madam, there be two or three ways to it;—but, if you want a letter fetch'd or carried, I'll do it with the utmost pleasure;—for, you look like a sweet lady, whom I shou'd be proud to serve.

CHAR. I thank you for your civility, friend; but I have no occasion to give you any such trouble.

EDW. Trouble, Madam! I am sure it could be
no

no trouble to serve you!—I shou'd think it the greatest happiness in the world!

CHAR. You are very good! There is something uncommonly gentle in the manners of this rustic. (*aside*) Pray, do you live hereabout?

EDW. Yes, Madam, just hard by.

CHAR. And what are you?

EDW. An honest farmer, Lady.

CHAR. A farmer! and so young?

EDW. Yes, Madam; my father died about a year ago; and, as our landlord offer'd for me to keep the farm, I thought I might as well work on it for myself, as for any other: so I became tenant to justice Rackrent.

CHAR. Justice Rackrent? I have heard of him, and his son; they say he is a most amiable young gentleman, and his father quite the reverse.

EDW. We are none of us so good as we should be, Madam; but, extremes in describing folk are seldom just: the old gentleman may be too much dispraised, and the young one too much commended.

CHAR. Engaging candour! he's very personable! and, for his condition, unusually intelligent! how happy may the female be who shares his humble lot! (*aside*) Are you married, pray?

EDW. No, Madam, nor do I think I ever shall.

CHAR. Why so?

EDW. Because I never saw but one whom I could love, and her I am unworthy of!

CHAR. No, surely!—There is something in this youth affects me strangely! the more I look on him, the more he strikes me; a hopeless lover, and so handsome! I pity him! [*Aside.*]

EDW. Can I be of any service to you, Lady?

CHAR.

CHAR. No other, gentle friend! than to direct me the nearest way to the town.

EDW. Please to keep strait on, till you come to yonder elms; then turn down the woodbine-walk, and you can't miss your way.

CHAR. I thank you, friend!—will you accept this trifle for your pains?

EDW. No, Madam, I give you thanks! I have enough, with honest industry;—the pleasure of serving you is sufficient recompence for any pains!

CHAR. (*aside.*) Heigho! what can this flutter mean! (*puts her hand to her breast.*) I never yet felt love!—sure, now I don't!—Since you decline the money, pray, oblige me by accepting this ring, of little value;—only, it may serve as a memorial of one who wish'd you well!

EDW. I thank you for your gift, but more for your good wishes, Madam; I'll wear it, and remember you unto my latest breath.

CHAR. Fare you well!—How very handsome! Heigho! (*aside.*) [Exit.

EDW. Angelic creature! complexion, feature, form, grace, speech, perfect all! with such complacency to one she thought so low!—O, Love! I have heard and read of thy great power, but knew it not before! She has taken full possession of my soul, and I have now no thought but how to gain her! She's going to the play; I'll home and dress—sit near her there; speak to her, if I dare; attend her, wooe her;—and, if I gain her not—but, let me not suppose it—no! she must, she shall be mine!— [Exit.

SCENE

SCENE III.

*Old RACKRENT's House.**Enter DOROTHY and TIMOTHY.*

DOR. Why, ay, Timothy! now thee do look somewhat like!

TIM. Yes, mistress Dorothy! I be quite another creature, now I be drest! Measter Yedward be gone a-fishing in my cloaths; and so, a' bid me come hoame in his'n: you know I always told you, I should grow jonteele one time or other, and you see now I ha' kept my word.

DOR. It be more nor I expected, indeed, Timothy.

TIM. Well, Dolly! don't you like me now?

DOR. Like you, Timothy? yes, why should I mislike you?

TIM. Ey! but, I mean, ben't you in love with me?

DOR. Why, I can't say, as how I be dying for love of you.

TIM. Noa! that's a pity! for I be dying for love of you; ey, and I wull die too, if you don't take compassion on me.

DOR. Lord, Timothy! I ne'er know'd you talk so fine before.

TIM. Why, noa; because I were never drest so fine before; fine cloaths be half-in-half to meake love in: and I be resolved to meake love wi' might and main, while I ha' these garments on.—When Measter Yedward comes hoame, and I be forced to d'off my finery, mayhap I shan't have a word to throw at a dog; so now, Dolly, don't stand haggling about the bargain; but, if so be as how I ha' won your heart, tell me so flat and plain.

DOR.

DOR. Why, indeed, you ha' gone nigher to it this a'ternoon, Timothy, than e'er you did in all your born days afore; for, if e'er I do marry, (and I ben't quite resolv'd to die a maid) I'm determined to ha' somebody smcart, and genteelish; I would not wed wi' a clownish clod, no, not an he were worth his weight in gold.

TIM. Why, then, my dear Dolly! I am your man!—and, for fear you should change your mind, when I ha' gotten my own cloaths on again,—here, here's a main thin-worn sixpence, crack'd almost acrofs; let's break it quite, between us. [*They break it, kiss the pieces, and exchange them.*]

DOR. Now we be troth plighted, and we two be one.

TIM. Yes, we two will make one.

DOR. But, will you promise to bespeak a smcart suit against wedding-day?—and, when we're married, teake a farm; that we mayn't be servants no longer?

TIM. Yes, that's what I wull! and, what d'ye think?—as good luck would have it, old Dobbins, of Fatland-farm, died last night; that'll be to let;—soa, I'll aks measter to-morrow to put we in it. [*RACKRENT coughs without.*]

DOR. Here a' comes i' the nick, Timothy; you had better ask un now.

TIM. Waunds!—but he munna see me wi' 'Squire Yedward's cloaths on—he'll make a mort to do, an' he does!—I'll run and slip on a round frock, will hide all, and be back again anon. [*Exit.*]

DOR. Heigho! well, this be what I little look'd for! thof Timothy ha' been casting sheeps-eyes at me a good while, I did not think he'd ha' com'd to the point so soon! but, since he have, I believe I can't do better nor marry him;—a good offer once refused may be repented all one's life a'ter!—

a'ter!—as for love,—that's neither here nor there: he's an honest, pains-taking creature; and I know he have scraped some money together; besides a tenement or two he ha' gotten; and were lately chose head-borough!—and I be a good, notable, stirring sort an a body, thof I fay it; wi' a little snug pocket; that (unless a' really wants it) a' shan't know nothing at all about; no, no,—I'll keep that for a rainy day! and so, if our miserly old master will let us Dobbins' farm—but, mum!—

Enter Old RACKRENT.

RACK. So, Dorothy; what's become of your London visitor?

DOR. By my truly, I canno' tell, your Worship! I han't set eyes on her sin' your Worship was so cross about her drinking tea wi' me; but, I aks your Worship's pardon a thousand times! I'll ne'er disoblige you again, while I do live, your Worship!

Enter TIMOTHY, in a smock-frock, with a pitch-fork.

TIM. We ha' cut all that hay, as you bid us, Sir, and be going about Long-field to-morrow; I am sure I ha' work'd as hard as thof it had been for myself o'er and o'er. When I have a farm of my own, it's my belief I shan't work half so hard: not but I shall be up early and down late, that I may pay landlord his rent, duly and truly.

RACK. Why, Timothy, you have done tolerably well; but you have had a deal of beer among you, while you were about it: I have just been gauging the barrel, and it's half empty already!—there's a charming, clear brook, runs close behind the meadow; I wonder you should prefer muddy brewage, to such a pure, wholesome element!

G

ment! do, try the brook to-morrow, Timothy, and set the other mowers a good example.

TIM. I wull, Sir! I'm sure I'd live upon hips and haws, and drink nothing but water all the year round, to save you money, Sir.

RACK. That's my good Timothy! and, let me tell you, hips and haws are very nourishing.

DOR. (*aside to TIM.*) Leave chattering a pack of nonsense, Timothy, and speak about the farm.

TIM. I wull, I wull;—hem! but, Sir!—I wanted to aks a small bit an a favour of your Worship.

RACK. A favour! I don't like that word;—a man can hardly ever hear it mention'd without paying for it.

DOR. No, your Worship; the favour Timothy wants to aks, *he* be to pay *you* for.

RACK. O, that alters the case!—what is it, my good Timothy? what is it?

TIM. Why, Sir, farmer Dobbins being dead, and Dorothy and I being agreed to marry and settle, we thought to meake bould to aks your Worship to let his farm to we.

RACK. Hum! what! Fatland-farm!—how much are you willing to give a-year for it, Timothy?—that farm has been under-let these thirty years?—it's worth at least double what old Dobbins paid for it:—Hum!—yes, I must have double.

TIM. Double!

DOR. O dear, your Worship! consider your own poor servants!

RACK. I must have—double! [*With apathy.*]

TIM. Noa, not double, your Worship?

RACK. Double!

TIM. The devil double you, say I? [*Aside.*]

RACK. Eh! what's that? the devil! what?

DOR.

DOR. He says a farm's a devilish trouble, Sir.

RACK. Why would he have one, then? I did not ask him; 'tis he that asks me.

TIM. Yes, your Worship! but I never dream'd you would aks double!—now, I should think, about——

RACK. Double!—that's the rent; take it, or leave it; I would not let it to a stranger under treble;—but, having a regard for you and Dorothy, I will, as a very great favour, let it you for double. [Exit.

TIM. Double! [After a pause, and looking

DOR. Double! significantly at each other.

TIM. What shall we do, Dorothy?

DOR. Nay, you ought to know best, Timothy; you ha' work'd the land, and used to keep Dobbins' accounts for him; before you com'd to serve this old skin-flint.

TIM. Why, ey! that's true, Dorothy; and, if we don't snap it up, there's farmer Graspe'm will double twice over for it:—so, we'll e'en strike a bargain, and sign and seal with old pinch-gut directly.—And then, Dorothy, for my new cloaths, and the wedding-day!—Double! double! (*mimicking old RACKRENT*) I wish his old bones were doubled, and nail'd up in a box, 'till I open'd it, and undoubled 'em; they wou'dn't lie straight till doom's-day! [Exeunt.

End of Act the Third.

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

*A Parlour at the Inn.**Enter CHARLOTTE, and MARIA.*

MARIA.

YOU cannot, sure, be serious?

CHAR. I never was more so.

MARIA. In love with him?—what, a peasant!
a clown!

CHAR. No, Maria, he's no clown! his manners are as gentle, his ideas as refined, nay, more so, perhaps, than those of many who were bred in the centre of urbanity.

MARIA. Childish, circulating-library, common-place nonsense! gentility and refinement in a bumpkin with clouted shoes?—this exceeds the most romantic of all romances; this is “a squire of low degree” with a vengeance! I thought myself sufficiently blameable in giving encouragement, as I told you, to the young fellow, Francis; who is not only intelligent and agreeable, but, as old Sterling says, has “the stuff” too.—

CHAR. Indeed, Maria, I begin to fear I have been deceived in, and misled by you.

MARIA. And indeed, Charlotte, I find I have been sadly deceived in you! I am content with
my

my rattle-cap, Frank, if I can get him, because I am only in the character of a servant; but, should we both miss our aim here, and I assume the *lady* at the next town, mark my words; if I don't marry the richest, and, perhaps, most noble on the spot, say, I am as unfit for our expedition as I now begin to think you are.

CHAR. But, my dear Maria! I have reflected on the impropriety, nay, dishonesty of our plan; and cannot prosecute it.

MARIA. You should have consider'd that before we left London, Madam! nor can you now relinquish it, without injuring me as well as yourself: I, therefore, expect, for the present, a due observance of our contract; if we fail here, we'll either pursue our joint, original plan, elsewhere, or, I will continue it alone: leaving you to your Arcadian scheme of happiness;—your paragon-peasant! and the delights of love in a clay-cottage!

CHAR. Your vivacity, Maria, puts a gloss upon villainy, and throws contempt and ridicule on the purest virtue and affection! yet, cannot you be serious for a moment, and consider?—

MARIA. And cannot you be gay for a moment? and consider that, unless you make haste, you'll be too late for the play!—so pr'ythee, my dear, no more of this squeamishness; but prepare to be adored by all the young heirs in the neighbourhood.

CHAR. I had much rather not go; pray, Maria, excuse me.

MARIA. No, that's impossible! go, you must; for, Frank tells me, young Rackrent's to be there; he's a pretty young fellow, I promise you; and, I am convinced, has heard of, and longs to see you: he's very rich too! and, if you play your cards
right,

right, may prove as advantageous a husband as the first peer in the kingdom.

CHAR. Well, Maria, I remember the adage—"there is honour among thieves;"—therefore, as I would not be thought deficient in a quality the highest glory in, and the very lowest affect, I'll keep my word as far as honestly I can, and go with you to the play; but, not with a view to gain young Rackrent, or any one my heart cannot approve! for, tho' I do not think it likely I shall ever have the choice, I here declare, I would prefer the youth I saw just now, and a life of toil, (ay, laugh if you please) to all the ease and grandeur, I might derive from a marriage with the most opulent, or noble!

MARIA. Ha! ha! ha! you are wrong, my dear Charlotte, you are certainly in the wrong.

CHAR. No, Maria! in this I can't be wrong! They who are deliberately, and habitually wicked, are absolutely so:—whilst those who, through want of thought, or from a sudden impulse of passion, blindly rush into error, are, in some degree excuseable; and their return to rectitude is a propitiation equally acceptable to Heaven and man!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Inn.

[Bell rings.]

Enter Mrs. MILLCLACK.

Mrs. MILL. Heyday! a phaeton and fix, with two postilions, a footman before, and others behind!—he's no small fool that rides in it, I warrant

rant him!—How unlucky that Frank should be out of the way! here William, John!—run to the door—shew his honour in!

[WILLIAM and other Servants cross the Stage. Now for the claret, and the hock! odd's my life, these are the customers! none of your port-drinkers, nor your eighteen-pen'orths of half-and-half! a body may pay scot and lot, maintain half a dozen soldiers for government, and put a trifle in one's pocket to boot, out of this sort of guests!

Enter General FAIRLOVE, Attendants, and Servants.

GENERAL. Come, look sharp, look sharp! there's my good lads! clap me four of the freshest horses you have to a post-chaise directly; it's too late to advance in the phaeton:—and be brisk, d'ye hear? for I must continue my march in a moment.

Mrs. MILL. Kindly welcome, Sir! won't your honour please to be shewn a room, and have your boots off?—here, boot-catcher! what would your honour please to drink after your journey?—William, shew the Captain into the castle.

GEN. Thank you, thank you, good woman!—as you were, lads! I shan't go into garrison here, nor halt the firing of three rounds:—bring me some ammunition, tho'; a sponging of brandy, a charge of cold beef, a bumper or two of sound old hock; then I shall be fit for action, and may do execution if I reach the works.

[Exeunt Servants, severally.]

Mrs. MILL. But, won't your honour please to be shewn a room?

GEN. No, no, dame! I shan't halt a moment; so, a truce with trifles and ceremony. I am not
come

come to quarter a score of raw-boned troopers on you: I am upon the march!

Mrs. MILL. Bless me, your honour's hurrying way puts me all over in a flusteration!

GEN. I am in as great a flusteration, as you call it, dame, as you can be; so, come, come!—give me what I call'd for, that I may remount. (*WILL. brings the GEN. brandy; he drinks.*) Sure I shall overtake them before night!

Mrs. MILL. Overtake who, your honour! if I may be so bold? not deserters, I hope! poor souls, how they will be punish'd!

GEN. No, no, not deserters, good woman; refugees only! that's the corps I am in pursuit of: so, tell me, what parties have gain'd this pass lately?

Mrs. MILL. I profess, your honour is too high-flown for me; I can't say I comprehend your worship.

GEN. No?—why, zounds! what travellers have gone by here to-day?

Mrs. MILL. O, a power, your honour! of all sorts and fizes! it being such a charming fine day, I sat at the door an hour or two, and saw more go by than I can well remember.

GEN. Well, those you *can* remember; what corps did they belong to?—Come, describe their uniforms.

Mrs. MILL. An't please your honour, I don't think they were at all uniform; for, first and foremost, there pass'd by a fine, tall, handsome serjeant, with four or five tag-rag recruits, a corporal, and drummer; a string of Irish hay-makers, and the little Welsh attorney.

GEN. Platoons to the recruits, and mask'd-batteries to the attorney! did no women come this road to-day, in a post-chaise?

Mrs.

Mrs. MILL. Women in a post-chaise?—O, yes; one woman, your honour, and a lady along with her.

GEN. One woman and a lady! Oh,—now we approach the lines; well, which way did they take their route? what downs are they encamp'd on?—or, do they lie in ambuscade any where hereabout?

Mrs. MILL. Indéed, your worship, I am but an ignorant body; and, as I said before, your honour's talk is too learned for me.

GEN. Damn these professional phrases; they make blockheads appear wise, and men of sense fools! why, Madam, to speak in terms more level to your apprehension; I believe you have described the identical persons I am in pursuit of: two young women, one of them appearing, no doubt, like a lady; the other, as you observed, may seem to be only her woman.

Mrs. MILL. Why, then, your honour, as sure as can be, they are the very couple that dined here to-day;—and a sweet, good creature the lady is:—ay, and a brisk, clever kind of body the other.

GEN. What, and have they decamp'd?—'Sfire! I mean, are they gone?

Mrs. MILL. Yes, your honour, they have been gone some time, to the play.

GEN. Play! what the devil does the woman mean?

Mrs. MILL. Why, the comedy, I think they call it, your honour! the actors are now playing in our assembly-room theatre.

GEN. Zounds! shew me the way to it directly! I'll try if I can't play a part too—

WILL. This way, your honour, this way.

GEN. March!

[*Exeunt GENERAL, WILLIAM, and Attendants.*

H

Mrs.

Mrs. MILL. Bless my heart, what a flutter has this blustering put me into! I shan't recover myself this half-hour. (*sits*) Here, chambermaid! Betty!

Enter CHAMBERMAID.

Give me a thimble-full of that brandy, yonder, William brought for Captain Bounce-about.

MAID. Yes, Ma'am. [*Goes to the bar for it.*]

Mrs. MILL. Come, be quick; don't creep so! you are as slow as the Captain's hasty: (MAID *pours a little brandy into the glass.*) and as niggardly as old Rackrent!—is that all you can afford me of my own liquor?

MAID. You said only a thimble-full, Ma'am.

Mrs. MILL. I know I did, Ma'am! but I didn't say a child's thimble-full; you might, at least, let my own thimble be the measure: (*drinks*) this inn-keeping is such a fatiguing life; give me a drop more. (*drinks again*) If I go on thus my spirits will soon be exhausted!—Where's Frank?

MAID. Ma'am!

Mrs. MILL. Ma'am! is the girl stupid?—where's my son? where's your young master?

MAID. I believe, Ma'am, he's gone to take a peep at the play.

Mrs. MILL. Hang the play, and the players too! If I did not get pretty handsomely by them, I should wish them far enough!—such a racket they make;—I can hear them *now*: enough to distract a body! with their stamping, and staring, and fighting, and dying! they almost turn the house out at the window.

MAID. Indeed, Ma'am, they do make a strange hurly-burly sometimes, sure enough.

Enter

Enter WILLIAM.

WILL. Oh, Ma'am, there's the devil to pay in the play-house; the folks are all in an uproar.

Mrs. MILL. What, with that harum-scarum-officer, I suppose.

WILL. Yes, Ma'am; for, as we went along, he ask'd me whereabouts the young lady was seated? so, I shew'd him to the box; when, in he bolts directly, snatches hold of her hand, and calls her his dear creature! the lady scream'd, 'Squire Edward, my young Master, and the rest interfered; and, in the scuffle, the lady fainted! the officer is gone to Justice Rackrent's for a warrant; and how it will end nobody knows.—O, here they come!—

Enter EDWARD and MARIA, leading CHARLOTTE.

EDW. Reach a chair for the lady somebody.

WILL. Here's one, Sir. [CHAR. sits.

MARIA. Have you any hartshorn, pray, Madam?

Mrs. MILL. O dear me, no! but here's some sal volatile.

CHAR. Oh!

EDW. Thank Heaven, she recovers!

MARIA. How do you find yourself now, my dear lady?

EDW. How fares my angel?

CHAR. O, Sir, why will you thus persist in troubling me? why expose me to public insult, and drive from me my health, my senses!

[Turning from him.

EDW. Be composed, dear Madam, and deign to look on me; it is not the rude intruder now addresses you, but your protector; who, to gain

an interest in your heart, would sacrifice his own.

CHAR. No matter who, or what you are; my heart's elsewhere disposed of.

EDW. O, say not so! and, pardon me, sweet creature! if I presume to say, I do not think it is.

CHAR. (*rising*) Sir, your ill-manner'd contradiction suits not with your appearance; and you are now equally offensive with the other stranger you rescued me from: if you're a gentleman, detain me here no longer.—Maria, let us go.

EDW. Stay, Madam, I conjure you;—and hear me but a moment!

MARIA. Pray, let the gentleman speak to you, Madam.

CHAR. What can he have to say that I should need to hear?

MARIA. No matter; pray, consent!

CHAR. Well!

EDW. Eternal blessings on you for that word!—and now permit me, dearest Madam, to repeat, and pray be not offended at it, that I have great reason to suppose your affections are not elsewhere engaged; nay, I overheard your confidante declare so: therefore, as I otherwise may never see you more, I here intreat you to impart your name, and your connexions, and give me leave to hope!

CHAR. All this my own imprudence has drawn on me!—but I will be explicit.—You think, perhaps, Sir, that I am a woman of fortune;—you are deceived: I am an indigent orphan!—so very poor, I have not even a heart! no, that too is lost! and so romantically. (*half aside*).

MARIA. (*overhearing her*) Romantically indeed!—and, since this is the case at last, I am determined

mined that all shall out.—Sir, we are neither more or less than a couple of adventurers; virtuous, tho', take that with you!—but, my silly partner in the scheme has declined going through with the project; having fixed her affections on some booby of a peasant, she met and conversed with this afternoon, in the grove.

EDW. (*with stifled transport*) On a peasant in the grove? impossible!

CHAR. O, Sir, with shame I own all that my friend has said is true! Yet, as a declaration of my sentiments, might have entailed misery on us both; I had the resolution, leaving a memorial of me, to fly from him and love!

EDW. Behold again, sweet maid! the blest memorial. [*Shewing the ring she had given him.*]

CHAR. (*looking earnestly in his face.*) Amazement! you were not sure the peasant!

EDW. Yes, my adored! and, having such a proof of your regard, my hand, heart, fortune, are at your disposal!

[*Kneeling, and kissing her hand.*]

Enter DOROTHY.

DOR. Oh, your honour! oh, 'Squire Edward! I thought as how it were you, had gotten into this priming-iron wi' the strange leady.—Such a ro-do!—I wish the leady, and you, and the leady's leady, and poor I, and all of us, aren't sent to jayl, and tried at next excises!

EDW. What's the matter, Dorothy?

DOR. Why, your honour! there be com'd a great officer, all bedaub'd wi' gold lace, to aks his worship, your father, to grant un a warrant to take you all up! but where he do mean to set you down, old scrat and himself only knows!

CHAR.

CHAR. Gracious Heaven! what will this end in?

MARIA. I protest I begin now to be frighten'd too!

EDW. Pray, dear Madam! pray, young gentlewoman! compose yourselves; if you will confide in my protection, I will immediately place you in security, and return to the event.

DOR. 'Las-a-daify, your honour! you canno' budge a step! they be at door by this'n!—but, don't ye be terrified, sweet my Leady! nor you, Mem! nor you, 'Squire Edward! I've do all I can to help you, indeed; I run'd here before 'em, while warrant were making out, on purpose: Timothy being to serve it, and we being cater-cousins, I've sure, an I do speak a good word for you, he won't be outrageous:—and, indeed, I've do all I can to serve you!—By the mass! here they do come;—pluck up a good heart now, sweet my Leady!

CHAR. Sir, I know not what to think of this; and must rely on your protection!

EDW. Be not alarm'd, I beg, Madam! I'll protect you with my life!

Enter TIMOTHY, with a constable's staff, and warrant.

TIM. Young 'Squire Yedward Rackrent! I aks pardon for my bouldness; but, being head-borough, and having a warrant, I apprehend and seize you in the King's Majesty's name!—moreover, and saving respect, I apprehend and seize you, my Leady!—and you, young gentlewoman!—and you—no! I don't seize no more—hem!

DOR. (*aside.*) Bless us! what a fine figure our Timothy

Timothy do cut, now that he be in power! if I warn't in such a teaking, I cou'd admire his meekness and audacity!

EDW. I'm astonish'd!—are you serious, Timothy? apprehend and seize us! for what?—and by whose authority?

TIM. By your father, the worshipful Justice Rackrent's authority; and for high-treason for aught I do know.—One of the King's officers made oath, and said, he has a right to seize that lady wherever he can find her.

CHAR. To seize me!

TIM. Yes; and he'll tell you so himself, for all you be so pratty! as soon as ever his worship, who is coming with him, can hobble here!—therefore, be advised by a friend, 'Squire Yedward, and ha' no more to say to her; for, thof she looks so like an angel, 'tis my belief she's a Turkish spy!

DOR. (*aside.*) A spy!—nay, then, I be sure I won't say one word for her, let Timothy be ne'er so outrageous; for fear I shou'd be taken up for a'complish!

Enter General FAIRLOVE, old RACKRENT, and FRANK.

GEN. (*as entering.*) Nay, but, Sir! pray, hear reason.

FRANK. Ay, do, landlord!

RACK. Don't talk to me, any of you! but shew me to him! where is this bully? this bravo? this Hector of a son of mine? I'll teach him better manners than to affront an officer! a general! a generalissimo, for aught I can tell! how thou'd we landed and monied men be safe in the possession of our property, without the protection

protection of the military? I'll teach the villain——

GEN. Nay, Sir, there's no occasion for your being so warm; I requested your assistance as a magistrate only, and justice should always be cool.—I am not so old, but I can take satisfaction for personal injuries myself.

EDW. Nor I so young, Sir, but I can give you satisfaction for any injury, you may imagine you have received from me!

RACK. Hold your tongue, firrah! don't dare to speak a word more in my presence!—I have heard the whole affair; a riot in the play-house, indeed! but, I'll put a stop to the play!—I'll have no more of it!

EDW. What, Sir! would you distress a whole community, for a casualty, which they were innocent of?

RACK. Hold your tongue, I say!—I have also heard of your being the champion of this paramount-puppet! as a punishment for which, I here declare, and I desire all parties present to take notice of it, that I disinherit you! I'll cut you off with a shilling, firrah! and, that I may be sure you will have no more, I'll sell my estates; and, when I die, be buried ten fathom under ground, and have all my money buried along with me! *[Exit.*

FRANK. Ten fathom under ground!—egad, if you are buried twenty, I believe, Beelzebub will find you out.

GEN. There, Madam! you hear the determination of your protector's father:—now, will you prefer love and poverty with him, or ease and affluence with me?

CHAR. Sir, I cannot conceive on what pretence you ground your insolence; and, as no one living

living can have a right to controul, or detain me, I beg I may be permitted to leave this place, without farther molestation. (*Going.*) Come, Maria!

GEN. Stay, Charlotte!

CHAR. Ha!—he knows my name!

GEN. By my sword, honour, and affection! I believe I have been so eager to recover my dear child, that I have not had thought enough to tell her, what I am certain she could not know untold; and, instead of flying to the arms of her fond, anxious father, perhaps she has mistaken me for a troublesome, ridiculous, old lover.

CHAR. What said you, Sir?—father!—can my father be alive?

GEN. Ay, my sweet girl! I am he! General Fairlove, your doating, happy father!

[*Embraces her.*]

EDW. Then, I am undone!

[*Walks up the stage despondingly.*]

FRANK. And I too, egad, for aught I know! he's not my turtle's father, I hope!

[*Talks apart with MARIA.*]

GEN. I no sooner arrived in London, than I was told, that you had read in the public prints, an account of the ship I came home in being lost; and, being also inform'd of your abrupt departure, having traced you to the inn you set out from, I instantly pursued, and have, here, happily regain'd my darling child, my Charlotte!

CHAR. Oh, Sir! this is not a place wherein I can properly express my filial feelings! but, forgive me, I beseech you, Sir, that so many years absence, with the belief that you were dead, should have made me not recognize my ever-honour'd parent!

GEN. I should not have known you, dear! when I accosted you so inconsiderately at the

I

play,

play, if circumstances had not assured me, that you were my own Charlotte Fairlove.

TIM. Oh, now the murder's out, Dorothy! the lady's no spy! I see plain enough; and, I suppose, your noble honour, I may let her go about her business?

GEN. You may, honest friend, with that for your pains. *[Gives him money.]*

TIM. Thank your right honourable worship, kindly!—Well, Dolly, ben't I a pure fellow, now! and didn't I bluster bravely?

DOR. Ay, that you did, Timothy! and, tho' I say it to your face, I ha' see'd many an overseer, and churchwarden, when they were bullocking of the poor, not look half so big.

CHAR. Your goodness, Sir, emboldens me to beg, that, however you may have reason to chide me for my late precipitate flight; as it has been productive of an unhappy breach between this young gentleman and his father, you will graciously consider him as the innocent victim of love and accident.

EDW. *(aside.)* Generous creature!

GEN. I do, my child!—and, as I perceive your reciprocal affection, if your hand and fortune will atone for the loss of his father's favour, he may command them.

EDW. Sir, I know not how to thank you for your noble offer! and will my charmer deign to ratify such bounty?

CHAR. More willingly than ever wretch exchanged her misery for bliss!

FRANK. We have been silent spectators hitherto, gentlefolks, as became us; but, now that one match is so happily concluded, I believe, with my mother's leave, another may be made up! and in fewer words.—What say you, Maria?

MARIA. Nothing.

FRANK.

FRANK. That's hardly a word at all.—Come, Maria! we have spoke plain English to one another, hitherto; don't let us go about the bush now.

MARIA. Why, then, thus it is—You have made pretty free with my lips, Frank; and, if I may judge by your present offer, are not displeased with the sample: here I am, just what I told you in the grove; honest, but poor: now, take me, or leave me.

FRANK. What say you, mother? she's a clever wench, faith! let me have her?

Mrs. MILL. And welcome, Frank!—she's a good girl, I believe, tho' frolicksome;—I'll give you a thousand pounds to begin the world with, and leave you five times as much when I die.

GEN. Well said, landlady; and, to convince you that you have not done amiss; her father, having repented his late harshness, authorised me to assure her of his concurrence in whomsoever should be her choice; adding, that they shall liberally partake of while he lives, and, at his death, inherit his entire property.

MARIA. My dear, good, little old dad!

FRANK. Perhaps, Maria, this may alter your mind?

MARIA. No, Frank!—I like you!—and will make you as good a wife, as if I had not brought you a penny.

FRANK. Say you so, my girl!—why then, hey for Hymen! and, farewell inn-keeping! we'll now turn gentry, mother; and you shall also shortly turn——

Mrs. MILL. What? impudence!

FRANK. Grand-mother!

MARIA. For shame, Frank!

GEN. Well said, young man! and, to keep you in countenance, old lady, my son-in-law looks a promise, as shortly to make me a grandfather.

EDW. My present happiness, Sir, is so complete, that it were avarice of bliss to think of future felicity!—possest of my charmer's hand and heart, tho' blessings may be multiplied, the transport of this moment can never be exceeded.

TIM. Saving your honours' presence, Dorothy and I be going to make a match on't too; and we'll do our best not to be behind hand with you.

DOR. Yes, your honours;—I'll always do my best; and be buxom at bed and board, as a good wife ought to be!

FRANK. Another happy couple! well said! egad, I believe this is Valentine's day, for all the birds are pairing!—May we be loving as sparrows, cheerful as linnets, and constant as turtle-doves; and may the cuckoo's note, "unpleasing to the married ear,"—be never heard by us, but as the harbinger of Spring.

THE END.